REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully requested.

Claims 3, 5, 28, 29, and 49-68 are now pending. Claims 65-68 have been added.

Prior Art Rejection

Claims 3, 5, 28, 29 and 49-64 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being

unpatentable over *Enomoto et al.* (U.S. Patent 5,974,401) in view of *Mayle et al.* (U.S. Patent

6,018,774). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent Claim 61

Independent claim 61 is directed to a network photograph service system. The system of

claim 61 comprises: a plurality of photo-finishing laboratories, each including a laboratory server

which stores picture images as image data; and a single center server installed in a service center,

which receives a printing service order via a network. The center server stores picture images

recorded by a customer as digital image data, makes the digital image data accessible on the

network, selects one photo-finishing laboratory out of said plurality of photo-finishing

laboratories to output a print in response to order information transferred from the customer via

the network, and provides the printing service requested in the order by transmitting instruction

information to the laboratory server installed in the selected photo-finishing laboratory, thereby

enabling the customer to select a desired photo-finishing laboratory out of a plurality of photo-

finishing laboratories to perform the printing service. The center server stores templates as image

data, makes the templates accessible on the network, and transmits information regarding at least

one template specified by the order information, as a portion of the instruction information when

a manipulated printing service using the template is requested by the order information. The center server stores the image data in correlation with storage location information showing the laboratory server in which the image data is stored, and selects, upon selection of the photo-finishing laboratory to output the print, the photo-finishing laboratory in which the laboratory server stores the picture image whose print has been ordered, based on the storage location information. The photo-finishing laboratory selected to output the print carries out processing the picture image to be printed by synthesizing the picture image and the template specified by the order information, and carries out printing of the manipulated image.

Therefore, in the system of claim 61, when a print of an image is requested by a customer, the center server selects, based on storage location information about a plurality of laboratory servers, each of which stores image data representing images, a laboratory server that stores image data representing the image, the print of which has been requested by the customer. Then, an image to be printed is synthesized at the selected laboratory server. Thus, an image is synthesized and printed at the laboratory server that stores the image data representing the image (the image is a high-resolution image, which is appropriate for printing). Therefore, in the present invention, it is not necessary to transfer the image data representing the high-resolution image, which has a large data amount, through the network. The present invention has an advantageous effect that the cost of obtaining prints, such as a communication expense, can be reduced.

The primary reference, *Enomoto*, discloses a digital print order and delivery method and system in which a user 10 sends image data and print order data to a selected photofinisher 12. Fig. 1; col. 7, lines 14-22. In this system, the user's personal computer 11 accesses a

photofinisher list 25, which allows the selection of a preferred photofinisher 12. Col. 8, lines 34-41.

Enomoto fails to teach or suggest a network photograph service system as defined in claim 61, which comprises a plurality of photo-finishing laboratories that each include a laboratory server and a center server, in which the center server stores template and picture image data, a laboratory server carries out processing of the picture image by synthesizing the picture image and the template for printing the processed image, and the processing and printing are carried out by a desired laboratory server selected in accordance with the customer's print service order. In Enomoto et al., an image is synthesized at the PC of the Customer. In Enomoto, image data representing the image that has been synthesized at the PC must be transferred to a print server through the network, and the image data synthesized at the PC has a relatively large data amount because the image data is used for printing.

Applicants respectfully submit that Mayle fails to make up for these deficiencies.

Applicants respectfully submit that the asserted combination of Enomoto and Mayle (assuming these references may be combined, which Applicants do not admit) fails to establish prima facie obviousness of independent claim 61 or any claim depending therefrom.

Independent Claim 63

Independent claim 63 is directed to a network photograph service system. The system of claim 63 comprises: a plurality of photo-finishing laboratories, each including a laboratory server; and a single center server installed in a service center, which receives a printing service order via a network. The center server selects one photo-finishing laboratory out of the plurality of photo-finishing laboratories to output a print in response to order information transferred from

a customer via the network, and provides the printing service requested in the order by transmitting instruction information to the laboratory server installed in the selected photo-finishing laboratory, thereby enabling the customer to select a desired photo-finishing laboratory out of a plurality of photo-finishing laboratories to perform the printing service. The center server maintains a record of processing instructed for each laboratory server by transmitting the instruction information, and manages a transaction occurring between the photo-finishing laboratories and/or between the center server and each photo-finishing laboratory, based on the record.

Therefore, according to claim 63, the center server installed in a service center receives a printing service order via a network and transmits instruction information based on the received printing service order to a laboratory server of a selected photo-finishing laboratory and maintains a record of the processing instructed in accordance with the instruction information so as to manage transactions. Accordingly, the transaction volume between the laboratory servers and/or between the center server and each laboratory server is managed by the center server. Therefore, in the present invention, a data-storage expense, a communication expense and the like for each customer can be calculated by utilizing the volume of transaction.

Neither *Enomoto* nor *Mayle* disclose or suggest this feature. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the asserted combination of *Enomoto* and *Mayle* fails to teach or suggest at least this aspect of the system defined by claim 63. Accordingly, the asserted grounds of rejection fails to establish *prima facie* obviousness of claim 63 or any claim depending therefrom.

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Independent Claims 49 and 55

Independent claim 49 is directed to a network photograph service method. The method of claim 49 comprises: providing a plurality of photo-finishing laboratories, each including a laboratory server in which picture images have been stored, and a single center server installed in a service center in which picture images as image data whose resolution is lower than the resolution of the picture images stored in the laboratories have been stored; making the digital image data stored in the center server accessible on the network; selecting one photo-finishing laboratory out of the plurality of photo-finishing laboratories to output a print in response to order information transferred from a customer via the network; and providing the printing service requested in the order by transmitting instruction information to the laboratory server installed in the selected photo-finishing laboratory, thereby enabling the customer to select a desired photo-finishing laboratory out of a plurality of photo-finishing laboratories to perform the printing service. The center server stores the digital image data in correlation with storage location information showing the laboratory server in which the image data is stored as high resolution image data, and selects, upon selection of the photo-finishing laboratory to output the print, the photo-finishing laboratory in which the laboratory server stores the high resolution image data of the picture image whose print has been ordered, based on the storage location information.

As described above, *Enomoto* discloses a digital print order and delivery method and system in which the user 10 selects a desired photofinisher 12 in accordance with a photofinisher list 25 accessed by the user's personal computer 11.

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Enomoto fails to teach or suggest the network photograph service method defined by claim 49, in which the center server stores low resolution picture images corresponding to high resolution image data stored at the individual photo-finishing laboratories and transmits instruction information to the laboratory server of a selected photo-finishing laboratory, in accordance with the photo-finishing laboratory that stores the high resolution image data for the selected print information.

The Examiner's reliance on *Mayle* fails to make up for this deficiency of *Enomoto*. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the asserted combination of *Enomoto* and *Mayle* (assuming these references may be combined, which Applicants do not admit) fails to establish *prima facie* obviousness of claim 49, or any claim depending therefrom. Applicants respectfully submit that this same reasoning applies to independent claim 55, and claims depending therefrom.

New Claims

Newly added claims 65-66 depend from claims 61 and 63, respectively. Therefore, these claims should be allowable at least in view of the arguments presented above.

New independent claims 67 directed to a method for ordering a print at a personal computer. The method comprises:

> receiving an order of a print of an image represented by image data of a customer at the personal computer, the order being made with reference to thumbnail images of the customer stored in a center server that is provided in a service center for receiving orders of prints, the center server being capable of communicating with a laboratory server provided in each of a plurality of laboratories, each having a photograph printer;

receiving information regarding a method for sending the print to the customer, the information including whether the print should be sent by mail;

when the information regarding the method for sending the print indicates that the print should be sent by mail, generating order information that represents the content of the order of the print and includes the address of the customer, and when the information regarding the method for sending the print indicates that the print should be sent using a method other than the mail, generating order information that represents the content of the order of the print and includes the e-mail address of the customer; and

sending the order information to the center server through the network.

Support for new claim 67 can be found at least at paragraphs [0024] – [0028] in the

specification. Applicants respectfully submit that neither *Enomoto* nor *Mayle* generate order

information based on information regarding a method for sending a print to the customer in the

manner claimed in new claim 67.

New independent claim 68 directed to a method for ordering a print at a personal

computer. The method of claim 68 comprises:

receiving an input of a password for accessing, through the network, image data stored in a server;

accessing, through the network, image data representing a low-resolution image of the image, the print of which will be ordered, and template image data representing a low-resolution template image of a template that will be synthesized with the image, the print of which will be ordered, wherein the data amount of the image data representing the low-resolution image of the image is lower than that of image data representing a high-resolution image of the image that will be used to produce the print, and wherein the data amount of the template image data representing the low-resolution template image of the template is lower than that of template image data representing a high-resolution template image of the template that will be used to produce the print;

receiving an instruction for synthesizing image data by combining the image data representing the low-resolution image and the template image data representing the low-resolution template image;

synthesizing the image data based on the instruction;

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receiving an order for a photograph print service, the order including a method for receiving a print of an image corresponding to the synthesized image data;

generating order information about the synthesized image data, the order information representing the content of the order for the photograph print service, and the order information including a processing procedure for inserting the low-resolution image into a blank area of the low-resolution template image; and

sending the order information to the server

New claim 68 supported at least by the description at paragraphs [0062] – [0068] of the specification. Applicants respectfully submit that neither *Enomoto* nor *Mayle* disclose or suggest the technique for generating order information for synthesized image data in the manner claimed in new claim 68.

Information Disclosure Statement

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner indicate consideration of the Information Disclosure Statements filed July 13, 2007, June 18, 2007, and March 19, 2004 by returning initialed forms SB08/1449.
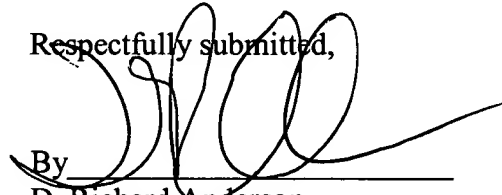
Conclusion

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

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If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

By

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